

✓mj 289248

Latimer, Becky

From: Latimer, Becky
Sent: Monday, December 30, 2019 9:48 AM
To:
Subject: 2019-290-WS

Dear William F Johnston and Ruth F Johnston,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your Letter of Protest/Comments to the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. Your Letter of Protest/Comments will be placed in the Protest File of the Docket listed below and on the Commission's Website at www.psc.sc.gov.

- Docket No. 2019-290-WS - Application of Blue Granite Water Company for Approval to Adjust Rate Schedules and Increase Rates

A Protestant is an individual objecting on the ground of private or public interest to the approval of an Application, Petition, Motion or other matters which the Commission may have under consideration. A Protestant may offer sworn testimony but cannot cross-examine witnesses offered by other parties.

According to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, filing a Protest does not make you a Party of Record. A Protestant desiring to become an Intervenor (i.e., a Party of Record) in a proceeding before the Commission may file a Petition for Intervention within the time prescribed by the Commission.

You can follow this Docket and other daily filings made at the Commission by subscribing to the Commission's Email Subscriptions at this link: <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Email>; or you can follow the individual Docket at the link listed below:

Docket No. 2019-290-WS - Application of Blue Granite Water Company for Approval to Adjust Rate Schedules and Increase Rates <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Web/Dockets/Detail/117247>

If we may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
Becky Latimer



* Required Fields

Date: * 30 Dec 2019

Letter of Protest
Docket No. 219-290-WS

Protestant Information:

Name * William F. Johnston (and Ruth F. Johnston)

Mailing Address *

City, State Zip * Pelzer

SC

Phone *

E-mail

1. What is your connection or interest in this case? * For example, are you a customer of the Company that is the subject of this pending proceeding? (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)

My wife and I are retired educators. We are homeowners and are wastewater customers of Blue Granite. We opted to drop their water services due to problems with water quality and cost, making a substantial financial outlay to be able to get our water from Greenville County (excellent quality at 25% of the cost compared to Blue Granite). Unfortunately, the County does not provide wastewater services, so we have no option other than to install a septic system, another big financial outlay.

2. Please give a concise statement of your protest. * (This section must be completed. Attach additional information if necessary.)

Zip Code 29669 (2017 figures: <https://www.towncharts.com/South-Carolina/Demographics/29669-Zipcode-SC-Demographics-data.html> notes on chart 8) has the largest population proportion aged 60-69 in SC. Social Security benefits have risen 6.5% since 2017, and the overall inflation rate for that period has been 4.9%. Blue Granite rates were increased 14.2% in September 2018 and, at that level, are already at more than double the quoted cost of living figures. Using the increase they are requesting, we would see an increase of about 70% since 2017 - five times the cost of living.

Given issues that water customers have had with water quality, it would appear that Blue Granite is attempting to address deferred maintenance and infrastructure issues and maintain shareholder profitability by passing all costs on to the customer. In any case, an overall increase of 70% in rates

3. Do you wish to make an appearance at a hearing in this proceeding, if scheduled, and offer sworn testimony? *

We are willing to appear should the Commission deem it of value, assuming the hearing is within reasonable travel distance for us.

Signature Required:

REF: Docket 219-290-WS

1. My wife and I are retired educators. We are homeowners and are wastewater customers of Blue Granite. We opted to drop their water services due to problems with water quality and cost, making a substantial financial outlay to be able to get our water from Greenville County (excellent quality at 25% of the cost compared to Blue Granite). Unfortunately, the County does not provide wastewater services, so we have no option other than to install a septic system, another big financial outlay.

2. Zip Code 29669 (2017 figures: <https://www.towncharts.com/South-Carolina/Demographics/29669-Zipcode-SC-Demographics-data.html> notes on chart 8) has the largest population proportion aged 60-69 in SC. Social Security benefits have risen 6.5% since 2017, and the overall inflation rate for that period has been 4.9%. Blue Granite rates were increased 14.2% in September 2018 and, at that level, are already at more than double the quoted cost of living figures. Using the increase they are requesting, we would see an increase of about 70% since 2017 - five times the cost of living.

Given issues that water customers have had with water quality, it would appear that Blue Granite is attempting to address deferred maintenance and infrastructure issues and maintain shareholder profitability by passing all costs on to the customer. In any case, an overall increase of 70% in rates over three years simply does not make sense... and even the 14% already approved is a large increase in relation to the cost of living and to those senior citizens who are on fixed incomes. To be more exact, this increase will have us paying over one thousand two hundred dollars a year for sewer - adding the cost of water to that would raise the total for water service to in the neighborhood of 4% of the average income for the area (about \$55,000): which means that half the population will be paying MORE than 4% of their total come for water service alone: a heavy onus. We sincerely hope that the PSC will continue to protect us as consumers and look to more reasonable adjustment.

3. We are willing to appear should the Commission deem it of value, assuming the hearing is within reasonable travel distance for us.

William F. Johnston

Greenville, SC 29609